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HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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Історія англійської мови:

Глосарій термінів і понять

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PREFACE

“History of the English Language. Glossary of Terms” represents a comprehensive list of the various terms and definitions that students encounter while studying the credit module “Introduction to Romano-Germanic linguistics. History of the English language”. The Glossary is designed to act as a source and reference base for the bachelor’s degree students, both daytime and part-time forms of training, specialty 035 Philology.

The Glossary contains almost 100 entries, which define the most frequent terms in the area of the history of the English language and which were selected on the basis of their importance and relevance within the History of the English language course. The Glossary also contains references to the socio-historical events and personalities that have shaped the English language.

The Glossary terms are listed in alphabetical order. Each term has a definition; most of them include examples and visual aids. For students’ convenience, each definition of the term is followed by the links to some recommended further reading and video references. The clickable links to terms within the Glossary make the navigation and therefore the comprehension easier.

The above-mentioned references after each term together with the extensive bibliography section make the Glossary essential for self-guided work on the History of the English language course.

The author hopes that *“History of the English Language. Glossary of Terms”* will be useful to its users and will help them master History of the English language course content easily. May your journey through the history of the English language be easy, enjoyable and unforgettable!

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS IN THE TEXT

AD	after Christ (<i>Anno Domini</i>)
BC	before Christ
c.f.	compare
e.g.	for example
etc.	and so on (<i>etcetera</i>)
Ger.	German
i.e.	that is
IE	Indo-European
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
Lat.	Latin
ME	Middle English
Mod. E	Modern English
OE	Old English
OSpan.	Old Spanish
PGmc	Proto-Germanic
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
RP	Received Pronunciation
vs	versus

USER INSTRUCTIONS

After most of the definitions of the terms you will find the links to some recommended further reading and video references.

Press  to read some additional information on the term.

Press  to watch a video related to the term.

ABLAUT

The change in the stem vowel of a verb to indicate a change in tense, normally from past to preterite or with the past participle. Ablaut is common in Germanic and is still seen in the system of strong verbs in both German and English, cf. English *sing* – *sang* – *sung*; *bleiben* – *blieb* – *geblieben*.

In the [Indo-European languages](#) the most widespread was the gradation *e-o*, e.g. Greek ‘*lego*’ (to speak) – ‘*logos*’ (a word); Latin ‘*tego*’ (to cover) – ‘*toga*’ (clothes).

In the Germanic languages the Indo-European gradation *e-o-zero* corresponded to the gradation *e-a-zero*, because Indo-European *o* = Germanic *a*; the Indo-European *e* corresponded in some Germanic languages, O.E. among them, to *i*: *i-a-zero*. For the Germanic languages, including [Old English](#), the ablaut is very important, as it is a means of word-change and word-building. E.g. four basic forms (the infinitive, the past tense singular, the past tense plural and Participle II) of the Old English verb *writan* ‘to write’ are as follows: (1) *writan* ‘to write’, (2) *wrat* ‘(he) wrote’, (3) *writon* ‘(they) wrote’, (4) *writen* ‘written’. In this example, besides different endings in the forms there is gradation of vowels in the root: *-i/-a/-i/-i-* (*-zero-zero*).



ACTIVE VERBS

Verbs, which include all process verbs and action verbs such as *write*, *work*, and *read* imply a change or a transition from one state to another; in the case of action verbs, this is caused by an agent.

The distinction [stative verbs](#) vs *active verbs* is relevant not only for verbs but also for subcategories of adjectives (old, rich vs fast, helpful), and plays an important role in the grammars of many languages. For example, in many languages, stative verbs cannot occur in the passive; in English, they cannot be used in the progressive, e.g. ~~*He is knowing Phil*~~ – *He knows Phil*.

The distinction stative vs active verb is a basic distinction of aspect.

AFFRICATE

A sound made when the air-pressure behind a complete closure in the vocal tract is gradually released; the initial release produces a plosive, but the separation which follows is sufficiently slow to produce audible friction, and there is thus a fricative element in the sound. Affricates are rather complex [consonants](#), e.g. English [tʃ] as in *chair*, [dʒ] as in *joy*.

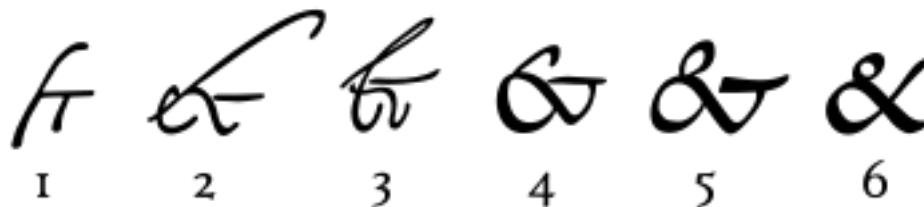


AMPERSAND (&)

A graphic representation (&) of the Latin ‘*et*’ (and).

The ampersand can be traced back to the 1st century A.D. and the Old Roman cursive, in which the letters E and T occasionally were written together to form a ligature (figure 1). In the later and more flowing New Roman Cursive, ligatures of all kinds were extremely common; figures 2 and 3 from the middle of 4th century are examples of how the et-ligature could look in this script. During the later development of the Latin script (9th century) the use of ligatures in general diminished. The et-ligature, however, continued to be used and gradually became more stylized and less revealing of its origin (figures 4–6).

The modern italic type ampersand is a kind of et-ligature that goes back to the cursive scripts developed during the Renaissance. After the advent of printing in Europe in 1455, printers made extensive use of both the italic and Roman ampersands. Since the ampersand’s roots go back to Roman times, many languages that use a variation of the Latin alphabet make use of it.



Evolution of the ampersand



ANALYTIC LANGUAGE

A language that uses specific grammatical words, or particles, rather than [inflection](#), to express syntactic relations within sentences. Typical examples of analytic languages include Chinese, English, Vietnamese, Thai, Khmer, Lao. Analytic language is to be contrasted with [synthetic language](#).

[Modern English](#) is analytic (i.e., relatively uninflected), whereas [Proto-Indo-European](#), the ancestral tongue of most of the modern European languages (e.g., German, French, Russian, Greek), was synthetic, or inflected. During the course of thousands of years, English words have been slowly simplified from the inflected variable forms found in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Russian, and German, toward invariable forms, as in Chinese and Vietnamese.

In English only nouns, pronouns, and verbs are inflected. Adjectives have no inflections aside from the determiners “this, these” and “that, those.” English is the only European language to employ uninflected adjectives; e.g., *the tall man*, *the tall woman*, compared to Spanish *el hombre alto* and *la mujer alta*.

As for verbs, if the Modern English word *ride* is compared with the corresponding words in [Old English](#) and Modern German, it will be found that English now has only 5 forms (*ride*, *rides*, *rode*, *riding*, *ridden*), whereas Old English *ridan* had 13, and Modern German *reiten* has 16 forms.

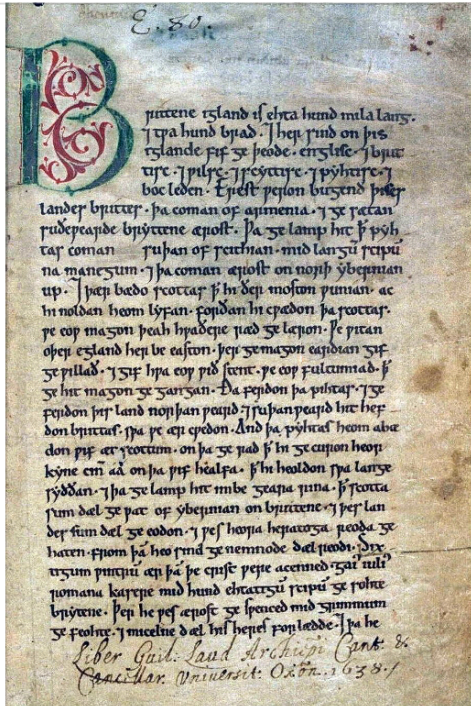


ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLES

A collection of annual records of events in [Old English](#) narrating the history of the Anglo-Saxons. It was originally compiled around 890 during the reign of King Alfred the Great. It was the first attempt to give a systematic year-by-year account of English history, and it was later maintained, and added to, by generations of anonymous scribes until the middle of the 1100s. The chronicle is the single most important historical source for the period between the departure of the [Romans](#) and the [Norman Conquest](#).

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is not a single document, but a set of related texts. All of the 9 surviving manuscripts are copies, so it is not known for certain where or when the first version of the Chronicle was composed. The Anglo-Saxon

Chronicle is the most important source for the history of England in Anglo-Saxon times.



The first page of the Peterborough element
of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, written around 1150

<p>Brūttenne iġland iſ ehta hund mila lang. ⁊ tpa hund bpað. and heſ ƿind on þiſ iġlande ƿiſ ƿeðeode. ſEnġliſc. ⁊ Brūttiſc. ⁊ ƿiſc. ⁊ ſcōttiſc. ⁊ Pſh- tiſc. ⁊ Bocleden. Epeſt pepon buġend þiſerlander Brūtter. þa coman of Ar- menia. ⁊ ƿeſætān ƿuðe- peapde Brūttenne æport.</p>	<p>The iſland Britain is eight hundred miles long, and two hundred broad, and here are in this iſland five nations, Engliſh, and Britiſh or Welch, and ſcotch, and Pictiſh, and Romans. The fiſt inhabitants of this land were Britons ; they came from Armenia, and ſettled in the ſouth of Britain fiſt.</p>
---	--

Ða ȝelamp hit ꝥ Pȝhtar
 coman řuřan of Scyřþian.
 mid langum řcipum na
 manegum. ꝥ þa coman
 ænorþ on norð Yber-
 nian up. ꝥ þær bædoScot-
 tar ꝥ hi þer morþon¹ pu-
 nian. Ac hi nolban heom
 lýřan. řorðan hi cþædon
 þaScottar. Þe eop maȝon
 þeah-hpaðeþe næd ȝelæ-
 non. þe piȝan oðer eȝland
 her be earþon. þer ȝe ma-
 ȝon earþian ȝiř ȝe pillað.
 ꝥ ȝiř hpa eop piðřtent.
 þe eop řultumiað. ꝥ ȝe hit
 maȝon ȝeȝangan.

Then it happened that the
 Picts came south from Scy-
 thia with long ships, not
 with many, and they came
 up first on the north of Ire-
 land, and there prayed the
 Scots that they there might
 abide. But they would not
 allow them; but the Scots
 said to them; We to you
 nevertheless may give ad-
 vice: we knowanotherisland
 here to the east, there you
 may dwell, if ye will, and if
 you withstand you, we will
 aid you, that you it may
 conquer.

An extract from The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles
translated into Modern English



ASSIBILATION

A sound change resulting in a sibilant [consonant](#) or into an [affricate](#) whose second element is a sibilant.

Assibilation could be observed already in the earliest stage of the [Old English](#) language. The consonant [k'] – in spelling *cg* – in the position before or after the front-lingual vowel changes into the affricate [tʃ].

The combination [sk'] in spelling *sc* changes into the sibilant [ʃ] in any position. In the intervocalic position after a short vowel [sk'] changes into the long sibilant [ʃʃ], in other situations – into the usual [ʃ].

The consonant [g'] – in spelling *g* – in the position before or after a front-lingual vowel changes into the affricate [dʒ]. In spelling these phonetic changes found expression only in the [Middle English](#) language: *cild* > *child* (child), *scip* > *ship* (ship), *brycg* > *bridge* (bridge).



ASSIMILATION

A change in the articulation of a [consonant](#) under the influence of a neighboring consonant. E.g., in the word *horseshoe*, /s/ in the word *horse* /hɔ:s/ changes to /ʃ/ under the influence of /ʃ/ in the word *shoe* /ʃu:/.

Assimilation of consonants is observed in the [Old English](#) language rather frequently. Full assimilation can be observed, for instance, in the words *wiste* > *wisse* 'knew', *wifman* > *wimman* 'woman'. Partial assimilation takes place in the following words: *stefn* > *stemn* 'voice', *efn* > *emn* 'level'.



BACK MUTATION

A change that took place in late prehistoric [Old English](#) and caused short *e*, *i* and sometimes *a* to break into a diphthong (*eo*, *io*, *ea* respectively) when a back vowel (*u*, *o*, *ō*, *a*) occurred in the following [syllable](#), e.g.: *seofon* 'seven' < *sebun* (cf.

Gothic *sibun*); *heol(o)stor* ‘hiding place, cover’ (cf. English *holster*) < earlier *helustr* < *hulestr* < *hulistran* (cf. Gothic *hulistr*); *mioluc*, *meoluc* ‘milk’ < *melukz* (cf. Gothic *miluks*); *liofast*, *leofast* ‘you (sg.) live’ < *libast*; *ealu* ‘ale’ < *alup*.

Also referred to as ***back umlaut***; ***guttural umlaut***; ***u-umlaut***; ***velar umlaut***.

BACK SLANG

A secret language in which each word is pronounced exactly or approximately as if spelled backwards, e.g. *nam* for *man*; *nird* for *drink*.

Back slang was popular with the street-vendors in Victorian London. The general rule is to spell a word backwards, and then, ideally, to employ the pronunciation approaching the closest to that often impossible arrangement of letters. The street-vendors themselves referred to back slang as *kacab genals*. Like rhyming slang, back slang started out as subterfuge, i.e. for fraud and trickery.



BEDE THE VENERABLE

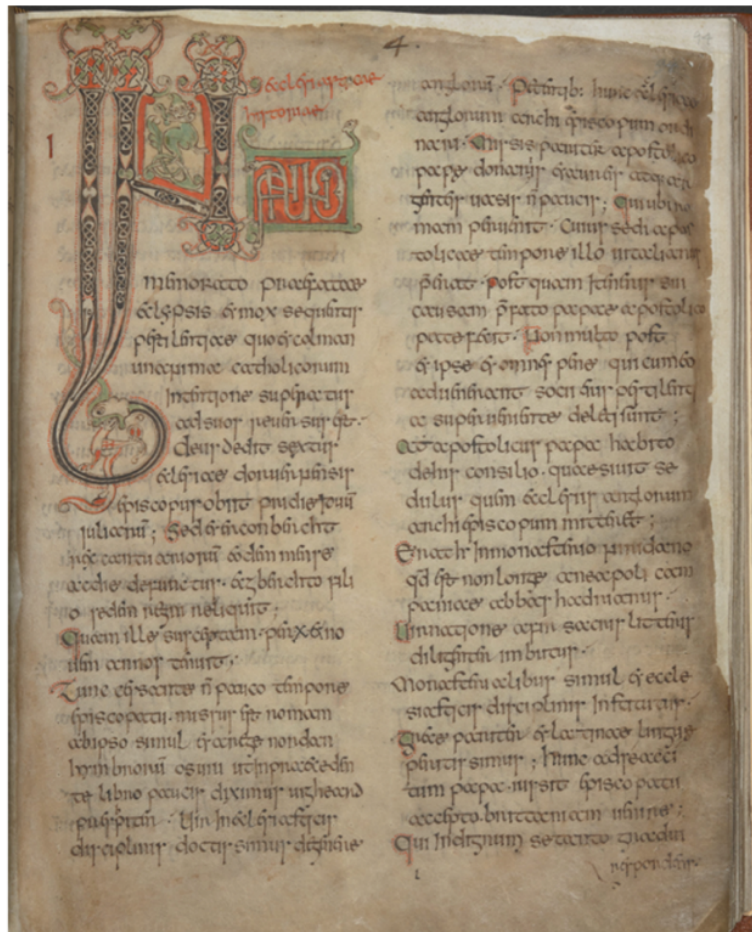
Bede (c. 673-735 CE) was an English monk, historian, and scholar who lived in the Kingdom of Northumbria. His most famous work, the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*), has been a vital source for the study of early English history for centuries.

In *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* Bede provides an in-depth history of England up to his own lifetime, but his main focus is the spread of Christianity in his native country. A lengthy discussion of the development of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms up to the 8th century CE is complemented with a catalogue of saints, converted kings, and miracles.

Bede pays particular attention to the rivalry between Rome-centered Church practice and the Celtic Christian communities which had been present in Britain and Ireland for centuries before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons. Bede's work is considered one of the most important sources of Anglo-Saxon history for modern-

day scholarship. It is a major source for political, social, and religious history in England during the early Anglo-Saxon age.

The translation of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* into Old English was completed at the court of Alfred the Great in the 9th century and has been seen as an important step in the development of English identity, as opposed to the number of unique regional identities of the earlier Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.



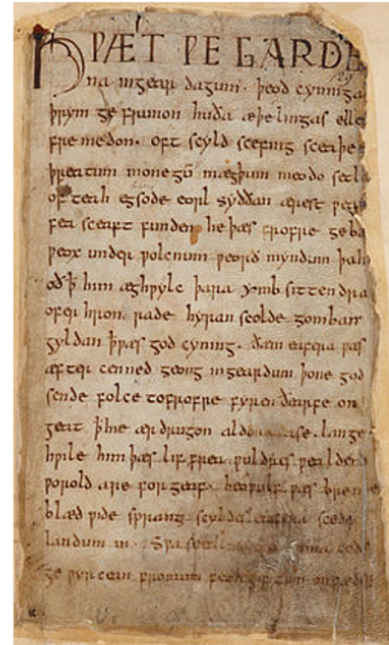
A page from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*,
1st half of the 9th century, The British Library



BEOWULF

The longest epic poem in [Old English](#), the language spoken in [Anglo-Saxon](#) England before the [Norman Conquest](#). More than 3,000 lines long, Beowulf relates the exploits of its eponymous hero, and his successive battles with a monster named Grendel, with Grendel's revengeful mother, and with a dragon which was guarding a hoard of treasure.

The manuscript bears no date, and so its age has to be calculated by analysing the scribes' handwriting. Some scholars have suggested that the manuscript was made at the end of the 10th century, others in the early decades of the 11th, perhaps as late as the reign of King Cnut, who ruled England from 1016 until 1035.



First page of Beowulf,
contained in Nowell Codex

Hwæt! We Gar-Dena in gear-dagum
þeod-cyninga, þrym gefrunon,
hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon!
Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum
monegum mægþum meodo-setla ofteah;
egsode eorl[as] syððan ærest wearð
feasceaf funden; he þæs frofre gebad,
weox under wolcnum, weorð-myndum þah,
oðæt him æghwylc þara ymb-sittendra
ofer hron-rade hyran scolde,
gomban gylðan. Þæt wæs god cyning!

Lo, praise of the prowess of people-kings
of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped,
we have heard, and what honor the athelings won!
Oft Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,
from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,
awing the earls. Since erst he lay
friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:
for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,
till before him the folk, both far and near,
who house by the whale-path, heard his mandate,
gave him gifts: a good king he!

Beowulf lines 1 to 11 translated by Francis Gummere in 1910



BORROWING

A word borrowed from one language into another language, which have become lexicalized (= assimilated phonetically, graphemically, and grammatically) into the new language: Lat. *pictura* – Eng. *picture*, Eng. *flirt* – Ger. *flirten*.

In the broader sense: an umbrella term for foreign word and loan word (in the above-mentioned sense). Here, a distinction is drawn between lexical and semantic borrowings (calque): in lexical borrowings the word and its meaning (usually together with the ‘new’ object) are taken into the language and used either as a foreign word (=non-assimilated loan) like *Sputnik*, *paté*, and *rumba*, or as an assimilated loan word (in the narrower sense).

Throughout its history, English has been subjected to influences from foreign cultures and languages, for example, through expansion of the Roman Empire, the migrations of the [Scandinavians](#), Christianization, the development and growth of science and the humanities, French borrowings on and off since the [Norman conquest](#), and more recent borrowings from dozens of languages in modern times, especially through the growth of telecommunications and universal travel.

Also referred to as *loanword*.

CASE

A grammatical category of [inflected](#) words which serves to indicate their syntactic function in a sentence and involves government and agreement.

There were 5 cases (*nominative*, *accusative*, *genitive*, *dative*, *instrumental* – for strong declension of adjectives) in [Old English](#) but in the history of English this was simplified considerably – the cases were reduced to *nominative* and *genitive*.

CASES	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Nominative case	fisc	fiscas
Genitive case	fisces	fisca
Dative case	fisce	fiscum
Accusative case	fisc	fiscas

The declension of Old English noun *fisc* ‘fish’ (masculine gender)

CELTS

A collection of tribes with origins in central Europe that shared a similar language, religious beliefs, traditions and culture. It's believed that the Celtic culture started to evolve as early as 1200 B.C. The Celts spread throughout western Europe – including Britain, Ireland, France and Spain – via migration.

By the mid-1st millennium, with the expansion of the Roman Empire and migrating Germanic tribes, Celtic culture and Insular Celtic languages had become restricted to Ireland, the western and northern parts of Great Britain (Wales, Scotland, and Cornwall), the Isle of Man, and Brittany.

Although they were the native inhabitants, the Celtic influence on the English language is limited due to their low status in the society. Celtic words include river and place names, e.g. *Kent, York, London, Dover, Thames, Avon, Cornwall*, and also such words as *basket, brave, boycott, clock, lawn, whiskey*.

Also referred to as *Britons*; *Celtic Britons*; *Ancient Britons*.



GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340s – 25 October 1400) was medieval English poet, writer, and philosopher best known for his work *The Canterbury Tales*, a masterpiece of world literature.

The *Canterbury Tales* is a work of poetry featuring a group of pilgrims from different social classes on a journey to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket in Canterbury who agree to tell each other stories to pass the time. Chaucer was well acquainted with people from all walks of life, and this is evident in the details he chooses as well as the accents employed, how the people dress,



Geoffrey Chaucer

and even their hairstyles. The Canterbury Tales have been invaluable as a kind of snapshot of medieval life.

Chaucer was multilingual, fluent in Italian, French, and Latin and translated works from French and Latin to English. He also established [Middle English](#) as a respectable medium for medieval literature (previously, works were written in either French or Latin) and coined many English words used in the present day (such as *amble*, *bribe*, *femininity*, *plumage*, and *twitter*, among numerous others) as well as inventing the poetic form of the Rime Royal. He is commonly regarded as the Father of English Literature.

By making a conscious choice to write in English, he symbolizes the rebirth of English as a national language. His works also helped the London dialect of English become a standard.



COCKNEY

Dialectal variant of British English spoken in the inner city of London. The name, derived from ME *cokenay* ('cock's egg'), was used originally as a nickname to refer to womanish townspeople in London.

Cockney speakers have a distinctive accent and dialect, and occasionally use rhyming slang. The most distinctive features of Cockney pronunciation is (a) the replacement of voiceless 'th' /θ/ with /f/, e.g. *think* /fɪŋk/, *theatre* /fɪətə/, *author* /ɔ:fə/; (b) voiced 'th' /ð/ would be pronounced /v/, e.g. *the* /və/, *this* /vɪs/, and *Northern* /nɔ:vən/; (c) 'h' dropping, i.e. /h/ is not pronounced at all, e.g. *horrible* /ɒrɪbəw/, *hospital* /ɒspɪtəw/, *who* /u:/, *help* /ewp/; (d) the diphthongs are wider than in [RP](#), e.g. *goat* /gʌʊt/ instead of /gəʊt/, *face* /fʌɪs/ instead of /feɪs/; (e) j-dropping, e.g. *news* /nu:z/ instead of /nju:z/.



COCKNEY RHYMING SLANG

A humorous slang first used by market traders, costermongers (sellers of fruit and vegetables from handcarts) and street hawkers in the East End of London and now understood widely in London and throughout Britain.

The construction of rhyming slang involves replacing a common word with a phrase of two or more words, the last of which rhymes with the original word; then, in almost all cases, omitting, from the end of the phrase, the secondary rhyming word making the origin and meaning of the phrase elusive to listeners not in the know, e.g. *Adam and Eve – believe: Would you Adam and Eve it? – Would you believe it?*

It is still a matter of speculation whether rhyming slang was a linguistic accident, a game, or a cryptolect developed intentionally to confuse non-locals. It may also have been used to allow traders to talk amongst themselves in marketplaces in order to facilitate collusion, without customers knowing what they were saying, or by criminals to confuse the police.

Examples of Cockney rhyming slang: *apples and pears – stairs; Baked Bean – Queen; Ball and Chalk – Walk; Barnaby Rudge – Judge; Barney Rubble – trouble; bees and honey – money; Bob Hope – soap; Brass Tacks – facts.*



COGNATE

A word which is historically derived from the same source as another word. In other words, cognates are words that have a common etymological origin.

Examples of cognates in [Indo-European languages](#) are the words *night* (English), *nicht* (Scots), *Nacht* (German), *nacht* (Dutch), *nag* (Afrikaans), *Naach* (Colognian), *natt* (Swedish, Norwegian), *nat* (Danish), *nátt* (Faroese), *nótt* (Icelandic), *noc* (Czech, Slovak, Polish), *ночь/noch* (Russian), *ноќ/noć* (Macedonian), *ноу/nosht* (Bulgarian), *nishi* (Bengali), *ніч/nich* (Ukrainian), *ноч, noch/noč* (Belarusian), *noč* (Slovene), *noć* (Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian), *nakts* (Latvian), *naktis* (Lithuanian), *vóǰ/nyx* (Ancient Greek, *νύχτα* / *nychta* in Modern Greek), *nakt-* (Sanskrit), *natë* (Albanian), *nos* (Welsh, Cornish), *noz* (Breton), *nox/nocte* (Latin), *nuit* (French), *noche* (Spanish), *nueche* (Asturian), *noite* (Portuguese and Galician), *notte* (Italian), *nit* (Catalan), *nuèch/nuèit* (Occitan) and *noapte* (Romanian), all meaning ‘night’ and being derived from the Proto-Indo-European **nókʷts* ‘night’.



CONJUGATION

Morphological marking of the verb stem with regard to the verbal grammatical categories of person, number, tense, mood, voice, and (to the extent it is grammaticalized) aspect.

Conjugational patterns differ from language to language. The formal distinction between regular and irregular verbs is a fundamental one in the English conjugational system.

CONSONANTS

The sounds made by a closure or narrowing in the vocal tract as a result of which the airflow is partially or completely blocked.

English has the following consonants: *plosives* /p, b, t, d, k, g/; *nasal consonants* /m, n, ŋ/; *lateral sonorant* /l/; *fricatives* /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/ the closure is so restricted that audible friction is produced, but there is no total closure of the airstream.

According to the active organ or place of obstruction the English consonants are classified into: *labial* made either with one (*labiodental* /f, v/) or both lips (*bilabial* /p, b, m, w/); *forelingual*: *interdental* /θ, ð/; *alveolar* /t, d, s, z, n, l/; *post-alveolar* /r/; *palato-alveolar* /ʃ, tʃ, dʒ, ʒ/; *medio-lingual*: *palatal* /j/; *backlingual*: *velar* /k, g, ŋ/; *glottal* /h/.

According to the manner of noise production, the English consonants are classed as: *constrictive* /w, l, r, j, f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/; *occlusive* /p, b, t, d, k, g, m, n, ŋ/; and occlusive-constrictive or *affricates* /tʃ, dʒ/.

According to the mode of vibration of the vocal cords the consonants are divided into *voiced* and *voiceless* consonants.

There are some consonants which lack the friction in their production. Such consonants are vowel-like in character and very often they are called semi-consonants, or semi-vowels, or *approximants*: /r, w, j/.



CONSONANT CLUSTER

A sequence of two or more consonant phonemes within the same syllable with no vowel sound between them, e.g., /str-/: *street*, *stray*, etc.; /sl-/: *sleep*, *sluggish*, etc.; /sn-/: *sniff*, *sneer*; /kr-/: *crash*, *crack*; /fl-/: *fly*, *flash*; /gl-/: *glow*, *glimmer*, etc.



CREOLE

A stable natural language that develops from the simplifying and mixing of different languages into a new one within a fairly brief period of time.

Creoles are often pidgins whose functional and grammatical limitations and simplification have been eliminated and which now function as full-fledged, standardized native languages. Creoles originated primarily in regions of colonialization where the indigenous people were either enslaved or otherwise made to be highly dependent upon their white masters. The social pressures of

assimilation lead originally from bilingualism (indigenous language and pidginized European language) to [pidgin](#) monolingualism and eventually to a complete loss of the original native language replaced by the creole.

Creoles are characterized by a considerably expanded and altered grammar and vocabulary. The classification of a creole is based upon its main source of vocabulary, namely French Creole (Louisiana, French Guyana, Haiti, Mauritius), English Creole (Hawaii), Dutch Creole (Georgetown).

DANELAW

A historical name given to the northern, central, and eastern region of Anglo-Saxon England colonized by invading Danish armies in the late 9th century. The name derived from the [Old English](#) *Dena lagu* (“Danes’ law”) under the assumption that its unique legal practices were of Danish origin.

In 886 the [Viking](#) leader Guthrum signed a treaty with King Alfred the Great of the Anglo-Saxons which granted Guthrum rule over a large area of East Anglia, called the Danelaw that was basically Danish territory in England.

Danelaw is also used to describe the set of legal terms and definitions created in the treaties between the English king, Alfred the Great, and the Danish warlord, the Viking leader Guthrum.

In 886, the Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum was formalised, defining the boundaries of their kingdoms and granting Guthrum rule over a large area of East Anglia, with provisions for peaceful relations between the English and the Vikings.



Alfred the Great



DECLENSION

Type of [inflection](#) of nouns, articles, adjectives, numerals, and pronouns that varies according to case, gender, and number.

English has largely lost its declensional system, with traces apparent only in plural formation (e.g. *books*), the possessive case (e.g. *Caroline's*), and object pronouns (e.g. *him*, *her*). Modern languages such as German and Ukrainian have retained more complete declensional systems.



DELABIALIZATION

Articulatory change (usually caused, in turn, by other processes of change) of rounded front [vowels](#) to unrounded vowels, e.g. the unrounding of the front vowels /y, o/ brought about by umlaut to /i, e/ in English and in some German dialects.

Also referred to as *unrounding*.



DELEXICAL VERB

Delexical verbs are common verbs such as *have*, *take*, *make* or *give* which when used with particular nouns have very little meaning of their own. In these delexical structures most of the meaning is found in the noun, not in the verb.

DIACRITIC

A graphemic addition to a written symbol used to create a new symbol from a pre-existing symbol. Economically, diacritics help keep the inventory of basic phonetic signs as small and as comprehensive as possible: for example, in German the diaeresis is used to distinguish between *ä, ö, ü* for /ɛ/, /ø/, and /y/ vs *a, o, u* for /a/, /o/, and /u/.

In the IPA, a diacritic is a little circle set below or above a letter distinguishes between voiceless and voiced consonants (e.g. voiceless /b/, /d/, /g/ as [b̥], [d̥], [g̥] vs voiced /b/, /d/, /g/ as [b], [d], [g]).

DIGRAPH

A group of two successive letters that represents a single sound or phoneme. Common vowel digraphs in [Modern English](#) include *ai* (*train*), *ay* (*hay*), *ea* (*each*), *ea* (*tread*), *ee* (*tree*), *ei* (*eight*), *ey* (*key*), *ie* (*niece*), *oa* (*toad*), *oo* (*brook*), *oo*

(groom), *ue* (true). Common consonant digraphs include *ch* (church), *ch* (scholar), *ng* (ring), *ph* (philosophy), *sh* (show), *th* (the), *th* (thought), and *wh* (wheather).

In [Old English](#) the digraph *cg* represented the modern sound /dʒ/, e.g. *bridge*, *fledge*, *midge*, and *ridge* were spelt *brycg(e)*, *flycg(e)*, *mycg*, and *hrycg*, respectively.

In [Middle English](#) the digraph *wh* replaced the Old English sequence of letters *hw*, e.g. OE *hwæt* > ME *what* /hwat/.

The digraph *th* evolved in Middle English to denote the interdental sounds. Old English /cw/ came to be symbolized as *qu*, e.g. *cwene* > *queen*.



DIPHTHONG

A sound, which changes its quality in the course of its production, i.e. it consists of movement or glide from one [vowel](#) to another.

The first element of a diphthong which remains constant and does not glide is called the *nucleus*. The nucleus of the diphthong is much longer and stronger than the *glide*. The total number of diphthongs in English is eight.

Iə here	eɪ wait	
ʊə tourist	ɔɪ boy	əʊ show
eə hair	aɪ my	aʊ cow

Modern English diphthongs

DIPHTHONGIZATION

A sound change by which simple [monophthongs](#) turn into [diphthongs](#), due to a shift in articulation or to phonological or phonotactic pressures, e.g. in the [Great Vowel Shift](#) OE *ī* /i:s/ > Mod. Eng. *ice* /aɪs/; OE *hūs* /hu:s/ > Mod. Eng. *house* /haʊs/.

ESTUARY ENGLISH

A contemporary variety of British English: a mixture of non-regional and southeastern English pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, which is thought to have originated around the banks of the River Thames and its estuary.

In some of its features, Estuary English is related to the traditional [Cockney](#) dialect and accent spoken by people living in the East End of London.

The features of Estuary English include the glottalisation, i.e. replacing [t] with a glottal stop, as in *butter* /'bʌʔə/; l-vocalization, i.e. the /l/ in words like *bell* becomes a vowel sound /bew/; pronunciation of /ð/ as /f/ or /v/ as in *mouth* /maʊf/ and *mother* /'mʌvə/; the use of multiple negation, as in *I ain't never done nothing*; the use of the non-standard *them books* instead of *those books*; omission of the -ly ending in adverbs as in *You're moving too quick*; usage of what is known as the confrontational tag question, i.e. a construction added to a statement, as in *I told you that already didn't I*.

Also referred to as ***Cockneyfied RP***; ***Nonstandard Southern English***.



FORTITION

A consonantal change that increases the degree of stricture. It's the opposite of the more common [lenition](#). For example, a [fricative](#) or an approximant may become a stop (i.e. [v] becomes [b] or [r] becomes [d]).

In [Old English](#) fortition was the process when voiced fricatives changed into plosives. The [Proto-Germanic](#) voiced [ð] was always hardened to [d] in OE, e.g. Gothic *goþs*, *godai* [ð] – OE *gōd* ‘good’.

The two other fricatives, [v] and [h] were hardened to [b] and [g] initially and after nasals, otherwise they remained fricatives.

Also referred to as *hardening*; *strengthening*.

FRACTURE

In [Old English](#), a change of the short [vowels](#) /æ/ and /e/ into [diphthongs](#) before some groups of consonants, when /æ/ turned into the diphthong /ea/ and /e/ into the diphthong /eo/. Such [diphthongization](#) took place when /æ/ or /e/ was followed by the combination of /r/, /l/ or /h/ with any other consonant or when the word ended in /h/. E.g.: **ærm* > *earm* ‘arm’, **æld* > *eald* ‘old’, **æhta* > *eahta* ‘eight’, **sæh* > *seah* ‘saw’, **herte* > *heorte* ‘heart’, **melcan* > *meolcan* ‘to milk’, **selh* > *seolh* ‘seal’, **feh* > *feoh* ‘property’.

FRICATIVE

A [consonant](#) sound made by narrowing the breath channel to produce friction.

In English, there are 9 fricative phonemes: /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/. The fricatives /v, ð, z, ʒ/ are voiced, whilst the sounds /f, θ, s, ʃ, h/ are voiceless.

In [Middle English](#), [Old English](#) back-lingual fricative /g/ changed into the bilabial /w/ after /r/ and /l/, e.g.: OE *morgen* ‘morning’ > ME *morwen*; OE *birgian* ‘to borrow’ > ME *borwen*; OE *galge* ‘gallows’ > ME *galwe*.

Quantitative changes in the [Modern English](#) period include the lengthening of an originally short vowel before voiceless fricatives – of /æ/ as in *staff*, *glass*, and *path* to /æ:/, which in the late eighteenth century was replaced by /ɑ/ in standard British English; most forms of American English, however, keep the unlengthened /æ/.



FUTHARK

A writing system used by [Germanic tribes](#) for Northwest Germanic dialects, named after the initial phoneme of the first six [rune](#) names: F, U, Þ, A, R and K. Futhark has 24 runes, each of them is given with its common transliteration:

ƒ	u	þ	a	r	k	g	w
h	n	i	j	ï	p	z	s
t	b	e	m	l	ŋ	d	o

Runic inscriptions are found on artifacts, including jewelry, amulets, plateware, tools, weapons, and, famously, runestones, from the 2nd to the 8th centuries.



The Amle Rune Stone



The Ågedal Runic bracteate

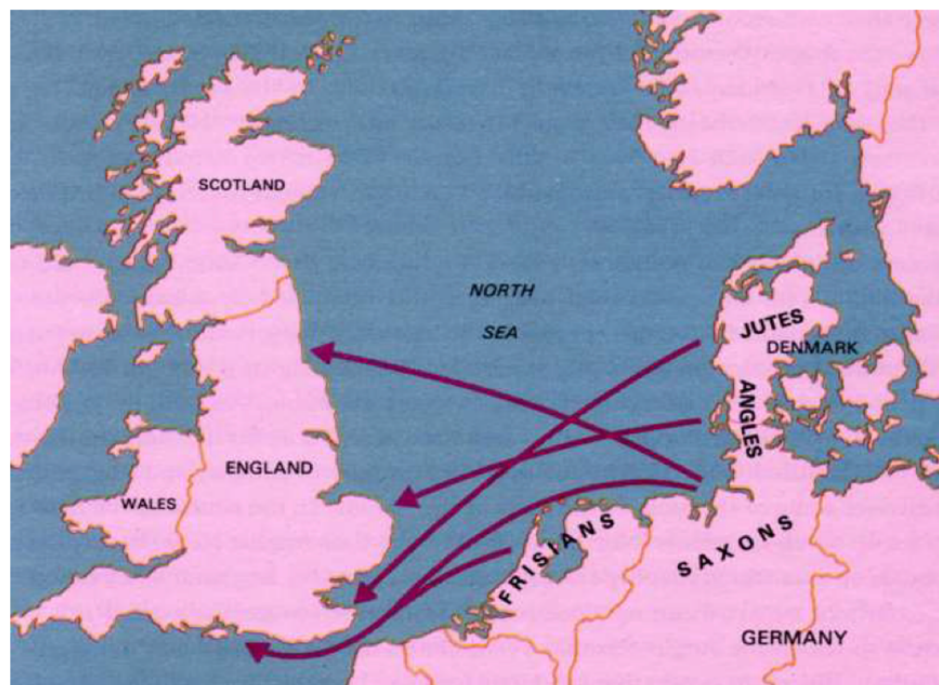
Also referred to as ***Runic alphabet***.

GERMANIC TRIBES

A diverse group of migratory tribes with common linguistic and cultural roots who dominated much of Europe during the Iron Age. When the Roman Empire lost strength during the 5th century, Germanic peoples migrated into Great Britain and Western Europe, and their settlements became fixed territories.

The Germanic tribes were classified into East Germanic (Vindili – Goths, Vandals and Burgundians), West Germanic (Ingvaeones – Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Frisians, Istaevones – Franks, Herminones – modern Germans) and North Germanic (Hilleviones – modern Scandinavians).

West Germanic tribes – the *Angles*, *Saxons*, and *Jutes* – began to settle in the British Isles in the 5th and 6th centuries AD.



The map of the migration of Germanic tribes to the British Isles

At the time of Anglo-Saxon invasion, the inhabitants of Britain spoke a Celtic language. But most of the Celtic speakers were pushed west and north by the invaders – mainly into what is now Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

The Angles, which was a dominating tribe, came from Engaland and their language was called *Englisc* – from which the words England and English are derived.

The arrival of the Germanic tribes in Britain in the second half of the 5th century marks the beginning of the [Old English](#) period, which lasted till the end of 11th century (1066 – the [Norman Conquest](#)).



GRAMMATICAL GENDER

A grammatical category in inflected languages governing the agreement between nouns and pronouns and adjectives; in some languages it is quite arbitrary but in Indo-European languages it is usually based on sex or animateness.

Grammatical gender manifests itself when words related to a noun like determiners, pronouns or adjectives change their form according to the gender of noun they refer to.

[Old English](#) differs markedly from Modern English in having grammatical gender in contrast to the Modern English system of natural gender, based on sex or sexlessness. Grammatical gender, which put every noun into one of three categories (masculine, feminine, or neuter), was characteristic of Indo-European, as can be seen from its presence in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and other [Indo-European languages](#). The three genders were preserved in Germanic and survived in English well into the Middle English period; they survive in German and Icelandic to this day.

If Anglo-Saxons wanted to say they had seen a foolish man and a foolish woman, they might have said, “*Wē sāwon sumne dolne mann ond sume dole idese*,” using for *sum* ‘some’ and *dol* ‘foolish’ the masculine ending *-ne* with *mann* ‘man’ and the feminine ending *-e* with *ides* ‘woman.’

[Modern English](#) is largely an ungendered language.

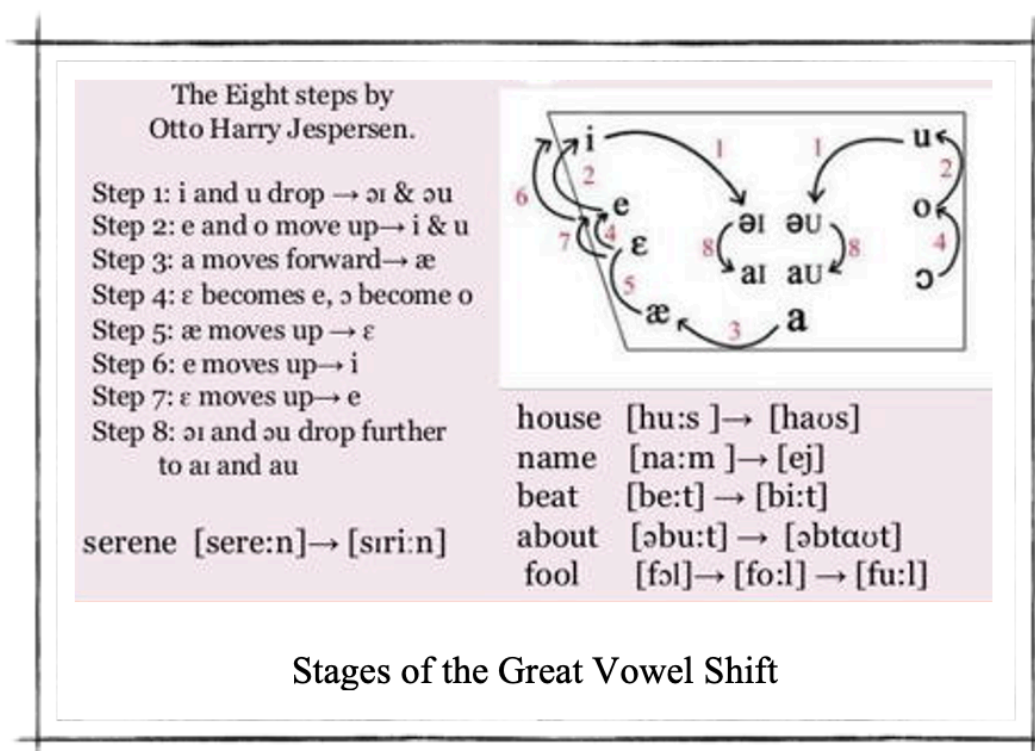
GREAT VOWEL SHIFT

A significant historical event in the development of the [Modern English](#) vowel system which was represented by a series of changes in the pronunciation of the English language that took place primarily between 1400 and 1700. English spelling began to become standardised in the 15th and 16th centuries, and the Great Vowel Shift is the major reason English spellings now often deviate considerably from how they represent pronunciations.

The general tendency of the Great Vowel Shift was that the vowels were narrowed and the narrowest ones ([i:] and [u:]) were [diphthongized](#).

In the process of the Great Vowel Shift *seven* [Middle English](#) long [monophthongs](#) ([i:], [e:], [ɛ:], [a:], [o:], [ɔ:], [u:]) turned into *two* monophthongs ([i:] and [u:]) and *four* [diphthongs](#) ([ai], [ei], [ou], [au]). It should be marked that the close [e:] and the open [ɛ:] finally merged in one vowel – [i:]. That is why in modern English there are nowadays such homophones as *see* and *sea*, *heel* and *heal*, etc.

For example, *time* – ME pronunciation [ti:me] and Mod. E pronunciation [taim]; *name* ME pronunciation [ˈna:me] and Mod. E pronunciation [neim].



The Variant of the Great Vowel Shift before -r. The middle English long vowel followed by the consonant -r developed in a different way. In this case the vowel which appeared as the result of the change was broader. For example, *tire*: ME pronunciation [ti:r] and Mod. E pronunciation [taɪə]; *bear*: Mod. E pronunciation [be:r] and NE pronunciation [beə].



GRIMM'S LAW

A formula, named after Jacob Grimm, describing the regular changes undergone by Indo-European stop consonants represented in Germanic, essentially stating that Indo-European /p, t, k/ became Germanic /f, th, h/; Indo-European /b, d, g/ became Germanic /p, t, k/; and Indo-European /bh, dh, gh/ became Germanic /b, d, g/.

According to J.Grimm's law, the Common Germanic Consonant Shift, which took place in the 4-2. c. B. C. – 3-4. c. A.D., included several stages: (1) the Indo-European (non-Germanic) voiceless plosives /p/, /t/, /k/ correspond to the Germanic voiceless fricatives /f/, /þ/, /h/ (рус. *полный* – O.E. *full*; Lat. *pater* – O.E. *father*; Lat. *cordia* – O.E. *heorte*); (2) the Indo-European voiced plosives /b/, /d/, /g/ correspond to the Germanic voiceless plosives /p/, /t/, /k/ (рус. *болото* – *pool*; рус. *еда* – *eat*; рус. *узо* – *yoke*); (3) the Indo-European aspirated voiced plosives /bh/, /dh/, /gh/ found in Sanscrit correspond to the Germanic voiced plosives without aspiration /b/, /d/, /g/ (Sanscr. *bhrata*, Lat. *frater* – Gothic *brother*; Sanscr. *madhu* (honey) – OE *medo*; Lat. *hostis* (=reconstructed Sanscr. *gh) (enemy) – Gothic *gasts*.



Jacob Grimm

HYBRID LANGUAGE

A language that arises among a bilingual group combining vocabulary or other linguistic characteristics of two or more languages but not clearly deriving primarily from any single language. It differs from a [creole](#) or [pidgin](#) language in that, whereas creoles/pidgins arise where speakers of many languages acquire a common language, a hybrid language typically arises in a population that is fluent in both of the source languages.

Also referred to as *mixed language*; *contact language*; *fusion language*.

I-UMLAUT

A historical change in Germanic whereby back and low [vowels](#) were shifted to a front position, e.g. /u,o,a/ to /i,ø,ɛ/, due to the assimilatory influence of a high vowel /i/ or the approximant /j/ in a following syllable.

The change of the vowels is as follows: [o] > [e], e.g.: **ofstian* > *efstan* ‘to hurry’; [o] > [e], e.g.: **wopian* > *wepan* ‘to weep’; [u] > [y], e.g.: **fullian* > *fyllan* ‘to fill’; [u] > [y], e.g.: **ontunian* > *ontynan* ‘to open’; [ea] > [ie], e.g.: **hleahian* > *hliehhan* ‘to laugh’; [ea] > [ie], e.g.: **hearian* > *hieran* ‘to hear’; [eo] > [ie], e.g.: **afeorian* > *afierran* ‘to move’; [eo] > [ie], e.g.: **getreowi* > *getriewe* ‘true’.

English reflexes of *i*-umlaut can be found in various plural forms (e.g. *mouse* > *mice*) and in other cases (e.g. *drench* < West Gmc. **drankjan*). In German the reflexes of these are still very evident, e.g. *fahren* but *fährt* where the front vowel of the 3rd person singular present is historically due to *i*-umlaut caused by an ending no longer present in the word.

Also referred to as *Germanic umlaut*; *i-mutation*.

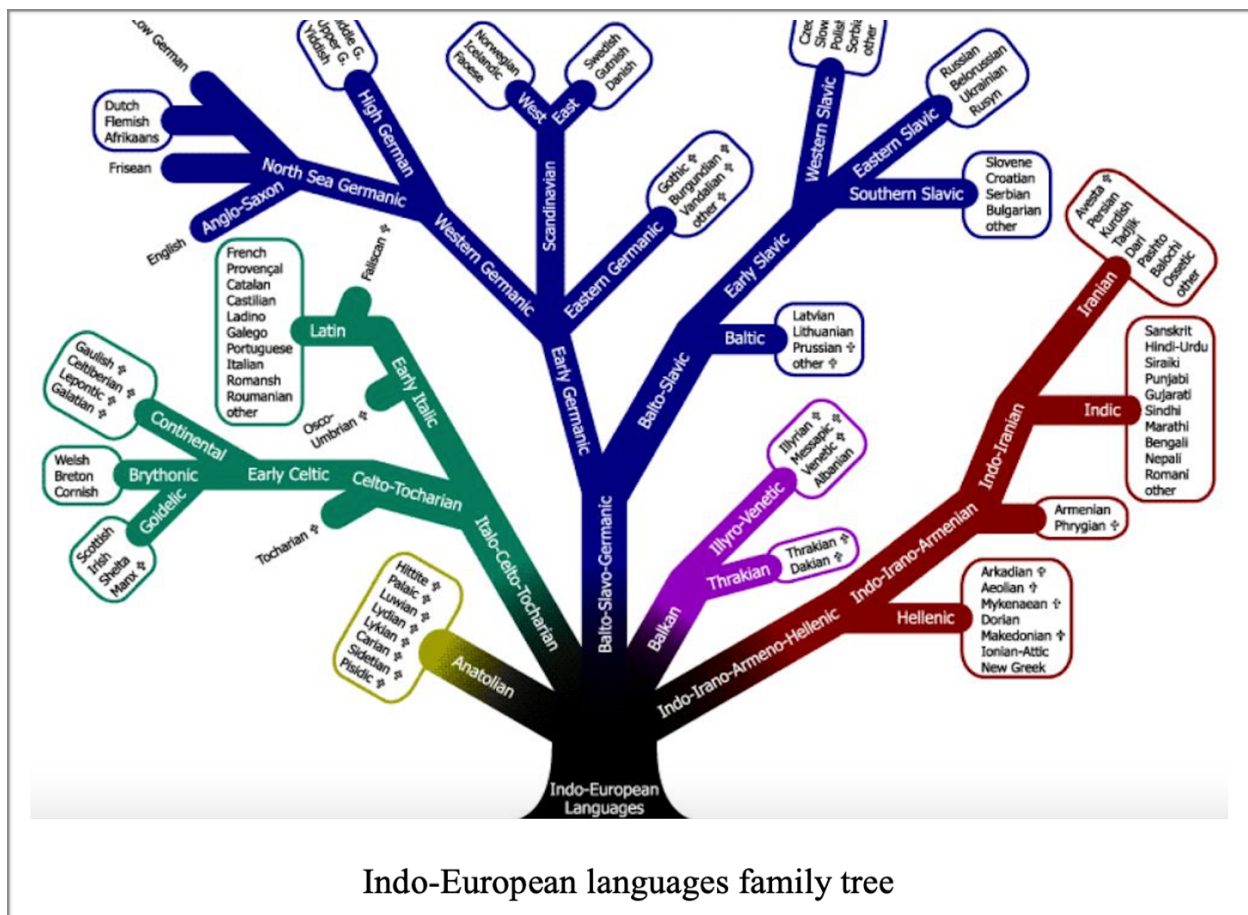
INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

A family of languages spoken in most of Europe and areas of European settlement and in much of Southwest and South Asia.

Indo-European languages descended from a common tongue, or [Proto-Indo-European language](#), spoken in the third millennium B.C. by an agricultural people originating in southeastern Europe.

Branches of Indo-European family include Indo-Iranian, Greek, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Armenian, Balto-Slavic, Albanian, Anatolian, and Tocharian.

English belongs to Western Germanic sub-branch of the Germanic branch of Indo-European family of languages.



INFLECTION

An alteration made to a word to indicate a certain grammatical category, e.g. number and case with nouns or person, number and tense with verbs. The number of inflections in a language can be taken as an indication of its type, a large number being characteristic of [synthetic languages](#).

LABIALIZATION

A secondary articulation in which the lip rounding is added to a sound. It involves any noticeable lip-rounding, as in the initial [k] or [ʃ] in [ku] *coo* and [ʃu] *shoe*, as opposed to [k] and [ʃ] in [ki] *key*, [ʃi] *she*.

The term is more often used in relation to consonants, since the term *rounded* tends to be used for vowels produced with rounded lips, e.g., as in the vowels [u, o, u:], as opposed to the unrounded [i, e].

Also referred to as ***rounding; lip rounding***.

LENGTHENING

Increase in the quantity of a segment, usually a [vowel](#).

In the [Old English](#) period lengthening was one of the most significant vowel changes. Lengthening occurred:

a) before the homorganic clusters *nd*, *ld*, *mb*: such words as *bindan* ‘bind’, *bunden* ‘bound’, *cild* ‘child’ began to be pronounced as /bi:ndan/, /bu:nden/, /ki:ld/. But in case there was a third consonant after *nd*, *ld* or *mb* no lengthening took place, e.g., in the plural form *cildru* ‘children’ the short [i] remains;

b) when *m*, *n* dropped out before *f*, *s*, *þ*, and *n* dropped out before *h*, e.g., **fimf* > *fi:f*, **uns* > *u:s*, **onþer* > *o:ðer*, **ponhte* > *po:the*; c) *g* dropped out before *d*, *n*. e.g. **sægde* > *sæ:de*; **frignan* > *fri:nan*; d) due to the falling out of the consonant [h] in the position between two vowels, while those vowels form one phoneme, mainly a long diphthong, e.g. [a] + [h] + vowel > [ea], e.g.: **slahan* > *slea:n* ‘to kill’; [e] + [h] + vowel > [eo], e.g.: **sehan* > *seo:n* ‘to see’; [i] + [h] + vowel > [eo], e.g.: **tihan* > *teo:n* ‘to accuse’; [o] + [h] + vowel > [o], e.g.: **fohan* > *fo:n* ‘to catch’. The dropping out of h between l and a vowel also caused the diphthongization and lengthening, e.g. **seolhas* > *seo:las* ‘seals’.



LENITION

A phonological process that weakens consonant articulation at the ends of syllables or between vowels, causing the consonant to become voiced, spirantized, or deleted. The opposite process is called [fortition](#).

Consonant weakening denotes a weakening of consonant strength (through a reduction in air pressure and muscle tension or an increase in sonority) to the complete loss of a segment, e.g. the development of [p] > [b] > [β] in the comparison of Lat. *lupus* > OSpan. *lobo* [lobo] > Span. *lobo* [loβo] ‘wolf’ or the loss of [d] in comparison to Lat. *vidēre* with Span. *ver* ‘see.’

Also referred to as ***weakening***; ***lenization***.

METATHESIS

A phonetic phenomenon when sounds ([consonants](#) and [vowels](#)) and sometimes even [syllables](#) in a word exchange their places.

A common form of metathesis is the reversal of /r/ and a short vowel in the histories of both English and German, e.g. OE *thridda* > ME *thirda*; ME *brid(d)* > *bird*. Metathesis is most frequent with vowels but is also found with consonants, e.g. OE *ascian* > ME *axian* ‘to ask’, OE *wascan* > ME *waxan* ‘to wash’.

Switching of consonants is observed within etymologically related words, e.g.: *nuclear* vs *nucular*, *Christian* vs *Kirsten*, Eng. *burn* vs Ger. *brennen*.

MIDDLE ENGLISH

A form of the English language spoken after the [Norman conquest](#) (1066) until the late 15th century.

While [Old English](#) was an inflectional language with grammatical gender for substantives (masculine, feminine, neuter), four cases, and strong and weak adjectival declension, Middle English is characterized by weakened and leveled endings (which means that the former variety of vowels in the unstressed endings was mainly reduced to two sounds – [e] and [i], e.g. *singen*; *sune*, *sone*), the degradation of the case system, the loss of grammatical gender, the simplification of plural formation, and the widespread loss of inflectional morphemes and the

penetration of a great number of loanwords, chiefly from the Scandinavian dialects and French, which is why distinctions between words with similar meanings often rest on coexisting Germanic and Romance roots: e.g. *freedom* (Gmc.) vs *liberty* (Rom.).

Current orthography of English, with its wide discrepancies between spelling and pronunciation, represents the sound inventory of the late Middle English period at the end of the 15th century, e.g. the various pronunciations of <ou> in *through*, *thousand*, *thought*, *though*, *tough*, *cough*, *could*.



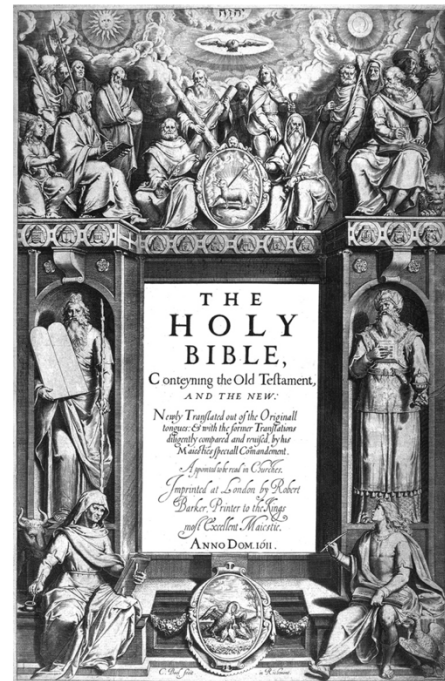
MODERN ENGLISH

Modern English Period (1500 – now) is divided into two stages: *Early Modern English* (1500 – 1800) and *Late Modern English* (1800 – Present).

Early Modern English is the stage of the English language from the beginning of the Tudor period to the English Interregnum and Restoration.

Phonological changes in Early Modern English include the [Great Vowel Shift](#); the variant of the Great Vowel Shift before -r; the changes of the diphthongs; the development of the long [a:]; the [monophthongization](#) of [au] and the development of the long open [o:]; the development of the long vowel [ɜ:] before -r; the change [er] > [ar]; the change [a] > [æ]; the [labialization](#) of [a] after [w] resulting in [wo]; the loss of the unstressed neutral vowel [ɜ].

The grammatical structure of the English language in the 15th and 16th centuries developed towards further



The title page to the 1611 first edition of the King James Bible

simplification and uniformity. The Modern English is the period of lost endings (*sing; son*) and a loss of freedom of grammatical construction. Of the three morphological categories known in Old English actually two remained – number and case – because the category of gender had practically disappeared in [Middle English](#).



Modern English has been greatly influenced by texts written in the late phase of Early Modern English, such as the King James Bible and the works of [William Shakespeare](#).

Late Modern English (1800 – the present time) is marked by the appearance of the Received Standard of English. English was adopted in regions around the world, such as North America, the Indian subcontinent, Africa, Australia and New Zealand through colonisation by the British Empire.



Also referred to as *New English*.

MONOPHTHONG

The [vowel](#) in the production of which there is no any noticeable change in its quality as in diphthong, which literally means a “double sound”.

i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:
sheep	ship	good	shoot
e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:
bed	teacher	bird	door
æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ
cat	up	far	on

Modern English monophthongs

MONOPHTHONGIZATION

A sound change by which a [diphthong](#) becomes a [monophthong](#). In languages that have undergone monophthongization, digraphs that formerly represented diphthongs now represent monophthongs. The opposite of monophthongization is vowel breaking.

In [Middle English](#), all the [Old English](#) diphthongs changed into monophthongs: (1) the diphthong /ea/ changed into the monophthong /a/ through the intermediate stage /æ/, e.g.: *eald* ‘old’ > *æld* > *ald*; *earm* ‘poor’ > *ærm* > *arm*; *healf* ‘half’ > *hælf* > *half*; (2) in the Southern dialects /ea/ changed into the long open e: *eald* > *eld*, *earm* > *erm*, *healf* > *helf*; the long diphthong /ea:/ changed into the long open monophthong /e:/: OE *bea:m* ‘tree’ > ME *bē:m*; OE *brea:d* ‘bread’ > ME *brē:d*; OE *dea:d* ‘dead’ > ME *dē:d*; (3) the diphthong /eo/ changed into the monophthong /e/ through the intermediate stage /o/, e.g.: *heorte* ‘heart’ > *horte* > *herte*; *steorra* ‘star’ > *storre* > *sterre*; *steorfan* ‘to die’ > *storven* > *sterven*; (4) the long diphthong /eo:/ changed into the long closed monophthong /e:/, e.g.: OE *ceosan* ‘to choose’ > ME *chesen*; OE *deop* ‘deep’ > ME *dep* or *deep*; OE *deor* ‘deer’ > ME *der* or *deer*; (5) the diphthong /ie/, both short and long, changed into the monophthong /i/ at the end of the Old English period: OE *gietan* ‘to get’ > ME *yiten*; OE *gielðan* ‘to pay’ > ME *yilden*; OE *giefan* ‘to give’ > ME *yiven*; OE *cie:se* ‘cheese’ > ME *chese* [i:]; OE *hie:ran* ‘hear’ > ME *heren* [i:]; (6) the

diphthongs /io/ and /io:/ had changed into /eo/ in the Old English language and the words with this diphthong developed along the usual line, e.g.: *siolfor* ‘silver’ > *seolfor* > *solver* > *selver*; *drio:rig* ‘cruel’ > *drorig* > *drery*.

MONOSYLLABLE

A word or utterance of only one [syllable](#). *Yes*, *no*, *jump*, *buy*, and *heat* are monosyllables.

The longest monosyllabic words in the English language, all containing nine letters each, are *screeched*, *schlepped*, *scratched*, *scrounged*, *scrunched*, *stretched*, *straights*, and *strengths*.

NATURAL GENDER

A gender based on the sex or, for neuter, the lack of sex of the referent of a noun, as English *girl* (feminine) is referred to by the feminine pronoun *she*, *boy* (masculine) by the masculine pronoun *he*, and *table* (neuter) by the neuter pronoun *it*.

NORMAN CONQUEST

The military conquest of England by William the Conqueror, duke of Normandy, primarily effected by his decisive victory at the Battle of Hastings (October 14, 1066) and resulting ultimately in profound political, administrative, and social changes in the British Isles.

After the Norman Conquest English was no longer the state language of England. At court, in the universities, in all the official spheres English was superseded by French, the language of the conquerors. English remained the language of the peasantry and the urban poor.

English was changing under the influence of



William the Conqueror

French soaking up French words and morphemes.

The following semantic classes of French borrowings in the [Middle English](#) language can be distinguished: 1) state, government and court – *prince, baron, royal, court, justice*, etc.; 2) army and military life – *war, army, battle, rank, regiment, siege*, etc.; 3) notions or religion and church – *religion, saint, prey, sermon, conscience, chapel, pilgrimage*, etc.; 4) names of town trades – *carpenter, butcher, tailor, painter*, etc.; 5) notions from the field of art – *art, colour, figure, image, ornament, dance*, etc.; 6) entertainment and feasts – *pleasure, leisure, dinner, supper*, etc.; 7) a great number of everyday words – *beef, pork, veal, face, hour, ink, letter, table, air, river, chamber*, etc.



The Normans



OLD ENGLISH

Language spoken and written in England, starting from the arrival of the [Germanic tribes](#) in Britain in the second half of the 5th century to the end of 11th century (1066 – the [Norman Conquest](#)).

Old English is characterized by full endings (which means that various vowels could be used in an unstressed position – e.g., *singan*; *sunu*), a developed system of cases and the predominance of original (non-borrowed) words.

Old English had three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter) in the noun and adjective, and nouns, pronouns, and adjectives were inflected for case. Noun and adjective paradigms contained four cases – nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative – while pronouns also had forms for the instrumental case.

Old English had a greater proportion of strong verbs (sometimes called irregular verbs in contemporary grammars) than does Modern English. Many verbs that were strong in Old English are weak (regular) verbs in Modern English (e.g., OE *helpan*, present infinitive of the verb help; *healp*, past singular; *hulpon*, past plural; *holpen*, past participle – Mod. E *help*, *helped*, *helped*, *helped*, respectively).

Old English possessed a developed morphological system, made up of synthetic grammatical forms.

Practically no analytical forms existed in Old English.

Old English was written down as it was pronounced ([phonetic spelling](#)). There were no '[silent letters](#)' in Old English.

Four dialects of the Old English language are known: Northumbrian, Mercian, Kentish, and West Saxon in southern and southwestern England. Most extant Old English writings are in the West Saxon dialect; the first great



A side of the Ruthwell Cross



The Franks Casket

period of literary activity occurred during the reign of King Alfred the Great in the 9th century.

Old English was first written in [runes](#), using the [futhork](#), extended by five more runes used to represent Anglo-Saxon vowel sounds. From around the 8th century, the runic system came to be supplanted by the Latin script introduced by Irish Christian missionaries.

The oldest inscriptions in Anglo-Saxon runes could be found on *Frank's Casket* and the *Ruthwell Cross*, which has inscriptions in both Latin and, unusually for a Christian monument, the runic alphabets.

Also referred to as *Anglo-Saxon*.



PALATALIZATION

The articulation characterized by the raising of the front part of the tongue towards the hard palate. Also, the term refers to the process in which the primary articulation is changed so that it becomes more palatal.

Palatalization of [consonants](#) and development of sibilants began in the earliest stage of the [Old English](#) language, e.g. the consonant [k'] in spelling *cg* in the position before or after the front-lingual vowel changed into the affricate [tʃ]; the combination [sk'] in spelling *sc* changes into the sibilant [ʃ] in any position; the consonant [g'] in spelling *g* in the position before or after a front-lingual vowel changes into the affricate [dʒ].

In the [Middle English](#) language the process of palatalization was completed. The palatalized consonant [k'] which stood next to front-lingual vowels changed into the affricate [tʃ], which was expressed in spelling by the letter combination *ch*. E.g.: OE *cild* 'child' > ME *child*; OE *cirice* 'church' > ME *chirche*; OE *tæ:can* 'to teach' > ME *tē:chen*.

The palatalized cluster [sk'] changed into the sibilant [ʃ] which was expressed in spelling by the combination *sch*, *ssh* or *sh*, e.g.: OE *scip* 'ship' > ME *schip*, *sship* or *ship*. However, in the words of the Scandinavian origin the cluster [sk] remained unchanged, e.g.: *skirt*, *sky*, *to ski*, etc.

Nowadays, palatalization is widespread in most Slavic languages, where there are pairs of palatalized and non-palatalized consonants. Palatalization is not typical of Modern English and is regarded as a pronunciation error.

PHONETIC SPELLING

A system of spelling in which each letter represents one spoken sound. In English, some words are pronounced exactly as they look. When *t* is used to spell *tiger*, the letter *t* is assigned one sound.

PIDGIN

A pidgin is a simplified language that develops as a means of communication between two or more groups that do not have a language in common. Many pidgins developed in territories that once belonged to European colonial nations, such as in parts of the Caribbean and West Africa, including as a result of the slave trade.

A pidgin is not the native language of any country or community, but must be learned as a second language. However, some pidgin languages may be common to several countries, such as in West Africa. Once a pidgin becomes generally accepted and institutionalized it is usually categorized as a [creole](#).

POLYSEMANTIC WORD

A word which shows more than one meaning. One of the meanings is usually basic and the other is derived, e.g. *foot* (part of the body) and *foot* (base of something) as in *at the foot of the mountain*. So, *foot* is a polysemantic word.

POLYSYLLABIC WORD

A word which has more than one [syllable](#). *Antidisestablishmentarianism* definitely qualifies as a polysyllabic word.

PREFIXATION

Essential process of word formation in which an affix is attached to the beginning of a stem.

In the [Old English](#) language, the prefix **a:-** was used with the verbal stems and denoted transition into a different state, e.g.: *a:wacan* ‘awake’; the prefix **be-** had the meaning of the concentration of the action around a particular object, e.g.: *bethencan* ‘to think over’; the prefix **ge-** used with verbal stems had an aspective meaning and denoted the completion of the action, e.g.: *geseon* ‘to see (to have seen)’; the prefix **for-** was associated with the meaning of destruction or loss, e.g.: *forweorthan* ‘to perish’; the prefix **mis-** expressed negation, e.g.: *mislician* ‘to dislike’; the prefix **of-** intensified the meaning of the verb, e.g.: *ofslean* ‘to murder’ from the word *slean* ‘to kill’; the prefix **on-** was used to denote bringing back to the previous state, e.g.: *onbindan* ‘to untie’; the prefix **to:-** was used in the structure of the verbs with the meaning of destruction, e.g.: *to:brecan* ‘to break’; the prefix **un-** expressed negation, e.g.: *uncu:d* ‘unknown’; the prefix **wan-** also had negative meaning, e.g.: *wanhal* ‘unhealthy’.

The use of prefixes in word-building in [Middle English](#) considerably decreased. Only the prefixes **be-**, **mis-**, **un-** remain productive being mainly combined with verb stems. Beginning with 14th century a great number of French prefixes were borrowed in English, e.g. **de-**, **dis-**, **en-**, **em-**, **in-**, **im-**, **non-**, **re-**.

PROTO-GERMANIC LANGUAGE

The reconstructed proto-language of the Germanic branch of the [Indo-European languages](#).

A defining feature of Proto-Germanic is the completion of the process described by [Grimm’s law](#), a set of sound changes that occurred between its status as a dialect of [Proto-Indo-European](#) and its gradual divergence into a separate language.

The [Proto-Germanic language](#) is not directly attested by any coherent surviving texts; it has been reconstructed using the comparative method. Fragmentary direct attestation exists of (late) Proto-Germanic in early [runic](#) inscriptions and in Roman Empire era transcriptions of individual words.

Also referred to as *Common Germanic*.

PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE

The theorized common ancestor of the [Indo-European language](#) family. Its proposed features have been derived by linguistic reconstruction from documented Indo-European languages. No direct record of Proto-Indo-European exists.

RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION

One of many forms of standard speech throughout the English-speaking world; standard speech used in London and southeastern England.

Received Pronunciation, or RP, is an accent, not a dialect, since all its speakers speak Standard English. In other words, they avoid non-standard grammatical constructions and localised vocabulary characteristic of regional dialects.

Received Pronunciation is regionally non-specific, i.e. it does not contain any clues about a speaker's geographic background. But it does reveal a great deal about their social and/or educational background.

The following people have been described as RP speakers: *David Attenborough, members of The British Royal Family, David Cameron, Judi Dench, Rupert Everett, Boris Johnson, Vanessa Kirby, Helen Mirren, Carey Mulligan, Jeremy Paxman, Margaret Thatcher*, and others.



David Cameron, former Prime Minister
of the UK (2010–2016)



Queen Elizabeth II



Carey Mulligan, actress



RHOTACISM

A phonetic change whereby a voiced sibilant [z] develops further into [r]. This is found, for instance, in Germanic (compare English *lose* and German *verlieren*) and in Latin (compare *flos* : *floris* ‘flower’ in Nominative case : ‘flower’ in Genitive case).

As can be seen in English *was* : *were*, rhotacism was an important feature of Germanic verbal morphology because in some points in verbal paradigms an [s] was voiced (due to [Verner’s Law](#)) and this [z] developed further to [r].

ROMAN CONQUEST

A gradual process of Roman invasion, beginning in AD 43 under Emperor Claudius and being largely completed by 87.

Despite a series of uprisings by the natives, Britain remained part of the Roman Empire for almost 400 years, and there was a substantial amount of interbreeding between the two peoples, although the Romans never succeeded in penetrating into the mountainous regions of Wales and Scotland.

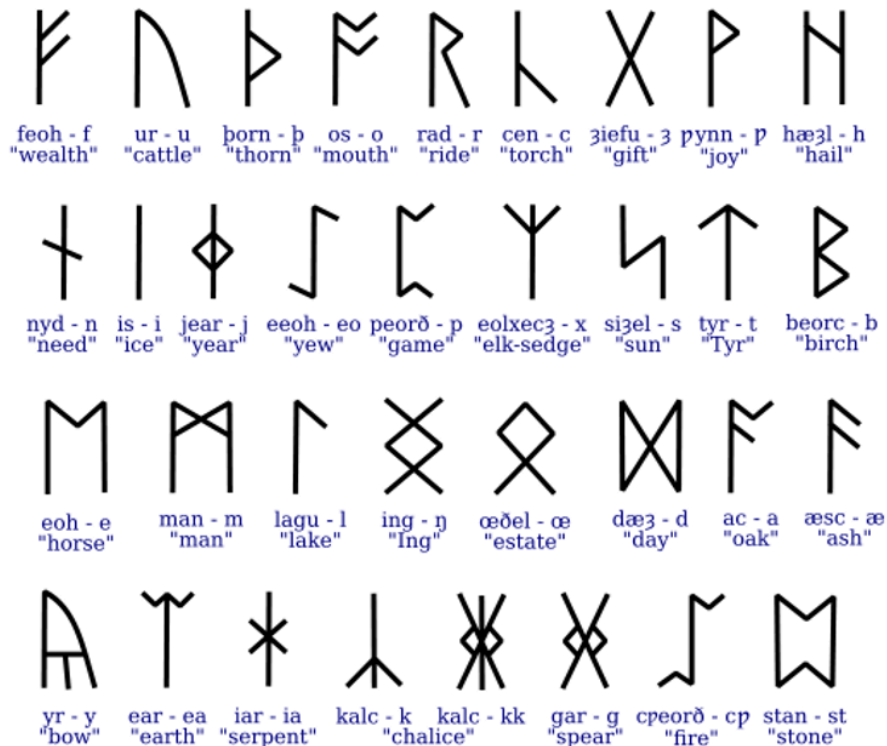
Although the Roman invasion had a profound effect on the culture, religion, geography, architecture and social behaviour of Britain, the linguistic legacy of the Romans’ time in Britain was surprisingly limited. This legacy takes the form of less than 200 [loan-words](#) coined by Roman merchants and soldiers, such as *win* (wine), *butere* (butter), *caese* (cheese), *piper* (pepper), *candel* (candle), *cetel* (kettle), *disc* (dish), *cycene* (kitchen), *ancor* (anchor), *belt* (belt), *sacc* (sack), *catte* (cat), *plante* (plant), *rosa* (rose), *cest* (chest), *pund* (pound), *munt* (mountain), *straet* (street), *wic* (village), *mil* (mile), *port* (harbour), *weall* (wall), etc. However, Latin would at a later time come to have a substantial influence on the language.

Latin did not replace the Celtic language in Britain and the use of Latin by native [Britons](#) during the period of Roman rule was confined to members of the upper classes and the inhabitants of the cities and towns.



RUNES

The letters in a set of related alphabets known as runic alphabets, which were used to write various Germanic languages before the adoption of the Latin alphabet. The Scandinavian variants are also known as *futhark*; the Anglo-Saxon variant is *futhorc* or *futhorc*.






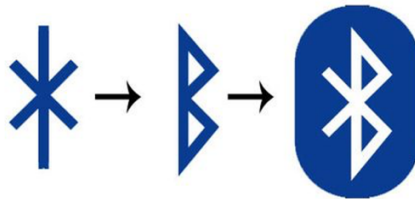
The Anglo-Saxon Futhorc

Each rune had a name that hinted at the philosophical and magical significance of its visual form and the sound for which it stands, which was almost always the first sound of the rune's name.

The runes functioned as letters and each rune was an ideographic or pictographic symbol of some cosmological principle or power, and to write a rune was to invoke and direct the force for which it stood. Indeed, in every Germanic language, the word *rune* (from Proto-Germanic **runo*) means both 'letter' and 'secret' or 'mystery', and its original meaning may have been simply a hushed message.

Runes were traditionally carved onto stone, wood, bone, metal, or some similarly hard surface, which explains their sharp, angular form.

It is interesting that a logo of Bluetooth  (a wireless technology standard used for exchanging data between fixed and mobile devices over short distances) is actually a bind rune merging the runes  (Hagall) and  (Bjarkan). The runes are the initials of the [Viking](#) King Harald Bluetooth, the king who ruled over all tribes in Denmark from the year 958 and then managed to conquer parts of Norway, making all the different tribes communicate and unite. The technology was called after Bluetooth because they had the same purpose – unity and communication.



Logo of Bluetooth, which is the ligature of two runes

SCANDINAVIAN INVASION

Scandinavian invasion of Britain, or the Viking Age, which started in approximately 793 with the first Viking raid on England which occurred at the Lindisfarne monastery.

By the second half of the 9th century the Scandinavians had conquered a considerable part of England to the North of the Thames and according to the conditions of the Wedmore treaty of 878 that territory was passed to the invaders. The part of the country occupied by the Scandinavians acquired a special status and was called [the Danelaw](#). The treaty obliged the Scandinavians to recognize the sovereignty of the English king. But the peace between England and the Scandinavians was



The Viking ship Oseberg on display at the Viking Museum in Oslo, Norway

not stable. At the end of the 10th century the war resumed and at the beginning of the 11th century all England was conquered by the Scandinavians. England became a part of the vast Scandinavian Empire and was ruled by the Danish king Cnut (or Canut). The Scandinavian reign in England lasted up to 1042 when the restoration of the [Anglo-Saxon](#) dynasty took place in the country.



Vikings as portrayed in *Vikings* TV series

As well as great warriors, Vikings were skilled craftsmen and boat-builders, adventurous explorers and wide-ranging traders. During over 250 years of their raids, the Vikings gradually turned from rampaging pirates to fellow Christians and citizens.

Scandinavian invasions had a great impact on the development of the English language. The Scandinavian dialects spoken by the

invaders were well understood by the inhabitants of England, which is explained by the close relation of their languages: both English and Old Scandinavian belong to the same West Germanic subbranch of the Germanic branch of the [Indo-European family of languages](#).

The Scandinavian words borrowed by the English language were mainly words of everyday life, e.g. nouns: *band, birth, booth, bull, calf (of a leg), egg, fellow, folk, gait, gap, guess, house, kid, leg, link, loan, man, mother, race, root, scales, score, seat, sister, skin, skirt, sky, steak, summer, tidings, thing, trust, want, wife, and window, winter*, etc.; pronouns: *they, their, them*; adjectives: *awkward, flat, ill, loose, low, meek, odd, rotten, scant, seemly, sly, tight, weak*; verbs: *to bait, call, cast, clip, come, crave, crawl, die, gasp, get, give, glitter, hear, kindle, lift, nag, raise, ride, scare, see, take, thrive, thrust, think*.

More than 1, 400 places in England bear Scandinavian names, e.g.: ending in **-by** ('farm' or 'town') – *Derby, Rugby*; ending in the word '**toft**' ('a piece of ground') – *Brimtoft, Nortoft*.

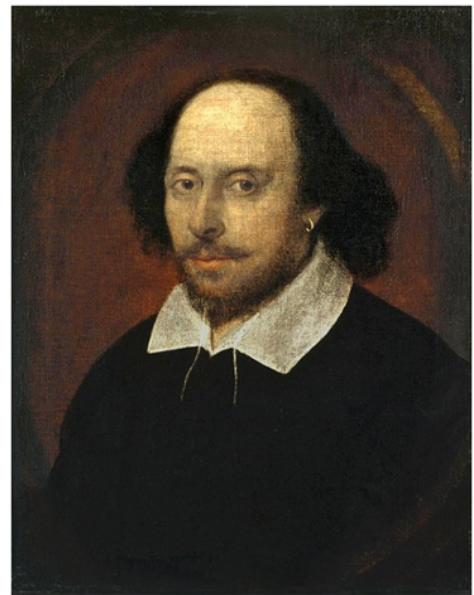
High percentage of Scandinavian personal names are found, e.g. names ending in **-son**, like *Stevenson*, and *Johnson*.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

English poet, dramatist, and actor often called the English national poet and considered by many to be the greatest dramatist of all time.

William Shakespeare had a great influence not only on theater and films and other poets and novelists, but also on the English language. He enriched English vocabulary with such words as *bandit* (*Henry VI, Part 2*), *critic* (*Love's Labour Lost*), *dauntless* (*Henry VI, Part 3*), *dwindle* (*Henry IV, Part 1*), *to elbow* (*King Lear*), *green-eyed* (*The Merchant of Venice*), *lackluster* (*As You Like It*), *swagger* (*Midsummer Night's Dream*), etc., and phrases *It's Greek to me* (*Julius Caesar*); *fair play* (*The Tempest*); *All that glitters isn't gold* (*Merchant of Venice*); *break the ice* (*The Taming of the Shrew*); *Clothes make the man* (*Hamlet*); *a laughing stock* (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*) and others.



William Shakespeare

SHORTENING

Decrease in the quantity of a segment, usually a [vowel](#).

SIBILANT

A fricative [consonant](#) sound, in which the tip, or blade, of the tongue is brought near the roof of the mouth and air is pushed past the tongue to make a hissing sound. In English /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/ are sibilants. Sometimes the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are also considered as sibilants.

SILENT LETTERS

A letter that, in a particular word, does not correspond to any sound in the word's pronunciation. For example, silent P: *psychology, receipt*; silent C: *miscellaneous, muscle*; silent G: *benign, gnomes*; silent B: *bomb, aplomb*; silent N: *damn, solemn, autumn*; silent T: *whistle, listen*.

Many of the silent letters in English are simply left over from [Old English](#) and [Middle English](#) – the pronunciation has changed over time, but the spelling has remained the same.

SONORANT

A sound which is [voiced](#) and does not cause enough obstruction to the airflow to prevent normal voicing from continuing. Thus vowels, nasals /m, n, ŋ/, laterals /l/ and approximants /j, w, r/ are sonorants.

STATIC VERBS

Verbs such as *know, possess, own* and *be able to* describe properties or relations which do not imply a change in state or motion and which cannot be

directly controlled by the entity possessing the property, i.e. stative situations cannot be started, stopped, interrupted, or brought about easily or voluntarily.

Related to this is the fact that stative verbs cannot usually occur in the imperative.

SUFFIXATION

The formation of complex words or word forms through the addition of a suffix to the word stem.

The main noun suffixes in [Old English](#) were as follows: the suffix **-ere** was used to denote a man's occupation, e.g.: *fiscere* 'fisherman' from the word *fisc* 'fish'; the suffix **-estre** was used in the words denoting a woman's occupation, e.g.: *baecestre* 'cook' from the verb *baecan* 'to cook, to bake'; the suffix **-ing** was used for the formation of nouns denoting belonging to a kin, e.g.: *cyning* 'king'; the suffix **-ling** was used as diminutive, e.g.: *deo:rling* 'darling'; with the help of the suffix **-en** nouns of the feminine gender could be formed, e.g. *gyden* 'goddess'; the suffix **-nis**, **-nes** was used for the formation of abstract nouns from adjectives, e.g.: *go:dnis* 'goodness' from the adjective *go:d* 'good, kind'; the suffix **-do:m** was used in the structure of some nouns of abstract semantics denoting state, e.g.: *wisdo:m* 'wisdom', *freo:do:m* 'freedom'; the suffix **-had** was used in words denoting state or title, e.g.: *cildhad* 'childhood'.

The main suffixes of adjectives were as follows: the suffix **-ihtē** was used to produce adjectives from the substantive stem and denoted incomplete quality, e.g.: *staenihite* 'stony' from the noun *stan* 'stone'; the suffix **-ig** was also used to form an adjective from the substantive stem, e.g.: *mistig* 'misty' from the noun *mist* 'mist'; the suffix **-en** was used to produce adjectives of material meaning, e.g.: *gylden* 'golden' from the noun *gold* 'gold'; the suffix **-isc** was used in words denoting belonging to a nationality, e.g.: *engelisc* 'English', *frencisc* 'French'; the suffix **-full** denoted the completeness of the quality, e.g.: *synfull* 'sinful' from the noun *synn* 'sin', *carfull* 'careful' from the noun *caru* 'care'; the suffix **-leas** had negative meaning, e.g.: *slaepleas* 'sleepless'; the suffix **-weard** denoted direction, e.g.: *hamweard* 'directed to or facing the house'.

By the end of the [Middle English](#) period a considerable increase of suffixes of French and Latin origin had taken place. The suffixes borrowed from French are as follows: **-age**, **-ance**, **-ence**, **-ard**, **-ee**, **-ess**, **-et**, **-ty**, **-ity**, **-tion**, **-ation**, **-ment**. The suffixes borrowed from Latin are: **-ism**, **-ist**.

In the Middle English language the suffixes produced from the nominal stems (**-dom**, **-hood**, **-ship**) were completely fixed as word-building morphemes.

Of the adjective-forming suffixes of the Old English origin **-ish**, **-y**, **-ed** remain *productive*. They enlarge their semantics and combinability with types of stems with which they could not be combined in the Old English language. The adjective-forming suffixes **-able**, **-ible**, **-ous** were borrowed from French. The suffixes **-ful**, **-less**, **-ly** produced from the adjective stems are finally fixed as word-building morphemes.

In the Middle English language the word-building patterns with the suffixes **-inge**, **-inga**, **-e** disappeared. By the end of the Middle English period the suffix **-ly** had become the most productive adverb-forming suffix. The number of verb-forming suffixes also enlarged. The suffixes **-ish**, **-ize** were borrowed from French, **-ify** from Latin.

SUPPLETION

The use of two or more phonetically distinct roots for different forms of the same word, such as in *good – better – the best*; *bad – worse – the worst*; *am, are, is, was, were, and be*.

SYLLABLE

The smallest unit into which the speech continuum is divided. It is the smallest pronunciation and perceptible unit since, as is known, in connected speech sounds are not pronounced separately; it is practically impossible to draw articulatory boundaries between syllables.

Each syllable contains only one [vowel](#).

SYNTHETIC LANGUAGE

A language in which syntactic relations within sentences are expressed by [inflection](#), i.e. the change in the form of a word that indicates distinctions of tense, person, gender, number, mood, voice, and case, or by agglutination, i.e. word formation by means of morpheme, or word unit, clustering. Latin is an example of an inflected language.

Synthetic languages are numerous and well-attested, the most commonly cited being Indo-European languages such as Sanskrit, Spanish, Persian, Armenian,

Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, German, Italian, French, Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish and Czech

[Old English](#) was a synthetic language, highly inflectional, with many endings on nouns, verbs and pronouns which indicated the grammatical function that a word possessed. These inflectional markers have changed notably over time. Many word endings have been lost and the language has instead gained grammatical words that substitute these old endings. Hence, Modern English leans toward a more [analytic](#) type of language with considerably less endings.

In Old English inflected forms were used to express comparison: *streng* ‘strong’ (positive) – *stengra* ‘stronger’ (comparative) – *strengost* ‘strongest’ (superlative). However, the comparative construction *more*, *most* was not typical in Old English.



VERNER'S LAW

The law according to which [Proto-Germanic](#) non-initial [voiceless fricatives](#) in [voiced](#) environments became voiced when the previous syllable was unstressed in [Proto-Indo-European](#).

For the Germanic languages the change was particularly significant because in verbal paradigms the original accent of Indo-European varied in position and hence induced Verner's Law (in the 2nd person singular and plural of the preterite for example).

Later in Germanic the stress was fixed on the first syllable and additional changes such as the shift of /z/ to /r/ (called rhotacism) further complicated the picture. The effect of Verner's Law is ultimately responsible for such alternations as *was* : *were* in the past of the verb ‘be’ in modern English (though many verb paradigms have been regularised by choosing one of the alternating sounds, contrast English *lose* with German *verlieren*).



VOCALIZATION

A shift in articulation which leads to a [consonant](#) losing its constriction in the vocal tract and adopting the character of a [vowel](#) or being absorbed by a preceding vowel. Such a shift happened in the history of English with /h/: *night* ME [niht] > [ni:t] > Mod. E [nait].

VOICING

A phonological process that turns a voiceless sound into a voiced one.

VOICED SOUNDS

The [consonants](#) uttered with the vocal cords vibration, e.g. /b, d, g, ʒ, z, ð, v/, etc.

VOICELESS SOUNDS

The [consonants](#) in the production of which the vocal cords are pulled apart so that they cannot be set into vibration by the airstream.

VOWELS

The class of speech sounds in the production of which there is no obstruction to the airflow as it passes from the larynx to the lips.

The vowels are classified: (1) according to the horizontal movement of the tongue: *front* (/i:, e, æ/ and the diphthongs /ei, eə, ai/, *front-retracted* (/ɪ/ and the diphthong /ɪə/), *mixed* or *central* (/ɜ:, ə/), *back-advanced* (/ʊ, ʌ, ɑ:/ and the diphthongs /əʊ, ʊə/), and *back* (/u:, ɔ:, ɒ /); (2) according to the vertical movement of the tongue: *close (high)*, *mid*, and *open* or *low*; besides the vowels may be of *narrow* and *broad* variation; (3) according to the position of the lips (*rounded* /u:, ɔ:, ɒ, ʊ/ and *unrounded* (/i:, e, æ, ɪ, ʌ, ɑ:, ɜ:, ə/); (4) according to the degree of articulatory organs muscular tension: *tense* and *lax*; (5) according to the stability of articulation: monophthongs /e, æ, ʌ, ʊ, ɒ, ə, i:, ɜ:, ɔ:, u:, ɑ:/ and diphthongs /ɪə, eə,

eɪ, ɔɪ, aɪ, əʊ, aʊ/; (6) according to the length of a vowel: historically *short* and historically *long* vowels.



WEAKENING

Phonetically motivated process of sound change that leads to the reduction of sounds and, in extreme cases, to loss of segments.

Typically, this occurs in positions where assimilation is favored or in syllabically ‘weak’ positions (e.g. in final position, in unstressed syllables). Two types of weakening are distinguished: (a) *consonant weakening* (or [lenization](#)): this denotes a weakening of consonant strength (through a reduction in air pressure and muscle tension or an increase in sonority) to the complete loss of a segment; (b) *vowel weakening*: this is a term for all processes that lead to a weakening of the articulatory movement in the sense of an increasing centralization of vowels and finally a total loss of the vowel, e.g. the loss of final vowels in English: OE *nama* [nama] > ME *name* [nɛmə], Mod. Eng. *name* [neɪm].

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